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1 Sounds, spellings and symbols

1.1 Phonetics and phonology

Although our species has the scientific name *Homo sapiens*, 'thinking human', it has often been suggested that an even more appropriate name would be *Homo loquens*, or 'speaking human'. Many species have sound-based signalling systems, and can communicate with other members of the same species on various topics of mutual interest, like approaching danger or where the next meal is coming from. Most humans (leaving aside for now native users of **sign languages**) also use sounds for linguistic signalling, but the structure of the human **vocal organs** allows a particularly wide range of sounds to be used, and they are also put together in an extraordinarily sophisticated way.

There are two subdisciplines in linguistics which deal with sound: namely, **phonetics** and **phonology**. To fulfil the aim of this book, which is to provide an outline of the sounds of various English **accents** and how those sounds combine and pattern together, we will need aspects of both. Phonetics provides objective ways of describing and analysing the range of sounds humans use in their languages. More specifically, **articulatory phonetics** identifies precisely which speech organs and muscles are involved in producing the different sounds of the world's languages. Those sounds are then transmitted from the speaker to the hearer, and **acoustic** and **auditory phonetics** focus on the physics of speech as it travels through the air in the form of **sound waves**, and the effect those waves have on a hearer's ears and brain. It follows that phonetics has strong associations with anatomy, physiology, physics and neurology.

However, although knowing what sounds we can, in principle, make and use is part of understanding what makes us human, each person grows up learning and speaking only a particular human language or languages, and each language makes use of only a subset of the full range of possible, producible and distinguishable sounds. When we turn to the characteristics of the English sound system that make it

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specifically English, and different from French or Welsh or Quechua, we move into the domain of phonology, which is the language-specific selection and organisation of sounds to signal meanings. Phonologists are interested in the sound patterns of particular languages, and in what speakers and hearers need to know, and children need to learn, to be speakers of those languages: in that sense, it is close to psychology.

Our phonological knowledge is not something we can naturally access and talk about in detail, certainly not without guidance or teaching. We often have intuitions about language, without knowing where they come from or exactly how to express them – but they are based on internal knowledge we certainly do have, and which can be drawn out by asking the right questions. For instance, speakers of English will tend to agree that the word *snill* is a possible but non-existent word, whereas **fnill* is not possible (as the asterisk conventionally shows). In the usual linguistic terms, *snill* is an **accidental gap** in the English vocabulary, while **fnill* is a **systematic gap**, which is excluded because of the **rules** of the English sound system. English speakers are not consciously aware of those rules, and are highly unlikely to tell a linguist asking about those words that the absence of **fnill* reflects the unacceptability of word-initial **consonant** sequences, or **consonant clusters**, with [fn-] in English (note that square brackets appear round **phonetic transcriptions**, which use **International Phonetic Alphabet** (**IPA**) notation to write down sounds precisely). The more likely answer would be that *snill* 'sounds all right' (and if you're lucky, your informant will produce similar words like *skill*, *spill*, *sniff* or *snip* to back up her argument), but that **fnill* 'just sounds wrong'. It is the job of the phonologist to express generalisations of this sort in precise terms, and ideally to explain them: after all, just because knowledge is not conscious does not mean it is unreal, unimportant or not worth understanding.

To use an example from a different sort of physical activity, when you run downstairs, you don't consciously think 'left gluteus maximus, left foot, right arm; right gluteus maximus, right foot, left arm' on each pair of steps. In fact, you're unlikely to make any conscious decisions at all, below the level of wanting to go downstairs in the first place, and relatively few people will know the names of the muscles involved. Worse still, becoming consciously aware of the individual activities involved is quite likely to disrupt the overall process: think about what you're doing and you finish the descent nose-first.

All of this is very reminiscent of our everyday use of spoken language. We decide to speak, and what about, but the nuts and bolts of speech production are beyond our conscious reach; and thinking deliberately about what we are saying, and how we are saying it, is likely to

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cause self-consciousness and hesitation, interrupting the flow of fluent speech rather than making us better at it. Both language and mobility (crawling, walking, running downstairs) emerge in developing children by similar combinations of mental and physical maturation, internal abilities, and input from the outside world. As we go along, what we have learned becomes easy, fluent and automatic; we become dimly aware of what complexity lies behind our actions only when we realise we have made a speech error, or see and hear a child struggling to say a word or take a step. Phonologists, like anatomists and physiologists, aim to help us understand the nature of that underlying complexity, and to describe fully and formally what we know in a particular domain, but don't know we know.

The relationship between phonetics and phonology is a complex one, but we might initially approach phonology as narrowed-down phonetics, linked in specific ways to meanings. Quite small babies, in the **babbling** phase, produce the whole range of possible human sounds, including some which they never hear from parents or siblings: a baby in an English-speaking environment will spontaneously make consonants which are not found in any European language, with their closest occurrence in an African language, say, or one from the Caucasus. However, that child will then naturally narrow down her range of sounds from the full human complement to only those found in the language(s) she is hearing and learning. Indeed, she is quite likely to claim, when later, at school, trying to learn another language with a different sound inventory, that she cannot possibly produce unfamiliar sounds she made perfectly naturally when only a few months old (so, lots of English speakers claim they can't produce the trilled or rolled 'r' sounds found in French, for example). Or within a language, subtle **instrumental analysis** of speech reveals that every **utterance** of the same word, even by the same speaker, will be a tiny fraction different from every other; yet hearers who share that language will effortlessly identify the same word in each case.

In this sense, phonetics supplies an embarrassment of riches, providing much more information than speakers seem to use or need: all those speakers, and every utterance different every time! Phonology, on the other hand, involves a reduction to the essential information, to what speakers and hearers think they are saying and hearing. The perspective shifts from more units to fewer, from huge variety to relative invariance, from absolutely concrete to relatively abstract; like comparing the particular rose I can see from my window, or roses generally in all their variety (old-fashioned, bushy, briar; scented or not; red, yellow, shocking pink), to The Rose, an almost ideal and abstract category to

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which we can assign or refer the many different actual variants. A white dog-rose, a huge overblown pink cabbage rose and a new, genetically engineered variety can all be roses with no contradiction involved. Putting this back into linguistic terms, it's not just that I say *tomahto* and you say *tomayto*; it's that I say *tomahto* and *tomahto* and *tomahto*, and the three utterances are subtly different, but we both think I said the same thing three times.

1.2 Variation

The discussion so far may suggest a rather straightforward dichotomy: phonetics is **universal**, while phonology is **language-specific**. But things are not quite that simple.

First, phonologists also attempt to distinguish patterns which are characteristic of a single language and simply reflect its history (in other words, they got there more or less by accident), from others which have a more universal motivation. In the case of the absence of **fnill*, or more generally, the absence of word-initial [fn-] clusters, we are dealing with a fact of modern English. It is perfectly physically possible to produce this combination of sounds; there are words in many languages, including Norwegian *fnise* 'giggle' and *fnugg* 'speck', which begin with just that cluster. Indeed, that very sequence of sounds was quite normal at the beginnings of words in earlier periods of English – *sneeze*, for example, has the **Old English** ancestor *fnēsan*, while Old English *fnæd* meant 'hem, edge, fringe', but it is not part of the inventory of sound combinations which English speakers learn and use today. The same goes for other initial clusters, such as [kn-]: this, again, was common in Old English, as in *cnāwan* 'to know', and survives into modern English spelling as <kn->, though it is now simply pronounced [n] (note that triangle brackets enclose written forms). [kn-] is also perfectly normal in other languages, including German, where we find *Knabe* 'boy', *Knie* 'knee', spelled <Kn-> but pronounced as the cluster [kn-]. There are cases, then, when it just so happens that a particular sequence or pattern of sounds does not turn up in a specific language at a specific historical period – though it is fine for humans in general, and perfectly normal in other languages and at other times.

On the other hand, there are some tendencies which are natural, general and very hard to avoid. If you say the words *intemperate* and *incoherent* to yourself as naturally as you can, and concentrate on the first consonant written *n*, you may observe that this signals two different sounds. In *intemperate*, the front of your **tongue** moves up behind your top front teeth for the *n* and stays there for the *t*; but in *incoherent*,

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you are producing the sound usually indicated by <-ing> in English spelling, with your tongue raised much further back in the mouth, since that's where it's going for the following [k] sound (spelled <c>). Processes of **assimilation** like this involve two sounds which are adjacent or at least close together in a word, becoming closer together or more alike in terms of pronunciation. This makes life easier for the speaker by reducing vocal tract gymnastics. Assimilation is an everyday occurrence in every human language, and it is particularly common for **nasal** sounds, like the ones spelled *n* here, to assimilate to following consonants. Explaining universal tendencies like this one will involve an alliance of phonology and phonetics: so phonologists are interested in universals too.

However, phonological differences also exist below the level of the language. Frequently, two people will think of themselves as speakers of the same language, but vary in their usage (sometimes you do say *tomayto*, while I say *tomahto*). This is not just an automatic, phonetic matter: in some cases, a single speaker will always use one variant, but in others, individuals will use different variants on different occasions. It also has nothing to do with the physical characteristics of the different speakers, or the different environments in which they may find themselves, although this was a common belief in the days before linguists adopted a rigorous scientific methodology. Thomas Low Nichols, a nineteenth-century commentator on American English, speculates that 'I know of no physiological reason why a Yankee should talk through his nose, unless he got in the habit of shutting his mouth to keep out the cold fogs and drizzling north-easters of Massachusetts Bay.' There is a natural tendency for geographically distant accents to become more different, simply because speakers who live far away have not tended to communicate with one another historically, so their ways of speaking drift apart; the same tendency has led the various Romance languages, such as Italian, Spanish, Romanian and French, to diverge from their common ancestor, Latin. In addition, speakers often wish, again subconsciously, to declare their allegiance to a particular area or social group by using language in the particular way that group uses it; these **accent differences** can be powerful social markers, on which we judge and are judged.

Furthermore, although there are agreed conventions which form the basis of the phonology of languages and of accents, those conventions can be subverted in various ways, just as in other areas of human behaviour. People change what they do, subtly or not so subtly, to suit the environment or the impression they want to make. In short, even phonologically speaking, there is more than one English – indeed, on

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one level, there are as many Englishes as there are people who say they speak English. Providing an adequate and accurate phonological description is therefore a challenge: on the one hand, a single system for English would be too abstract and would conceal many meaningful differences between speakers; on the other, a speaker-by-speaker account would be too detailed, and would neglect what unifies speakers and allows them to recognise one another as using the same system. Linguists therefore tend to talk about varieties of a language – accents or **dialects**, whose speakers will typically share more features than two speakers of different varieties. Within an accent, there will still be **variation** depending on the speakers' physical characteristics, or geographical location, or because some speakers have adopted a new form or word or sound from another group or language.

In what follows, we will concentrate on a small number of varieties – Southern Standard British English; Scottish Standard English; General American, the most frequently encountered broadcasting variety in the United States; and New Zealand English. All of these are abstractions, and combine together a range of constantly shifting subvarieties and individual usages; but they are useful in illustrating the range of variation within English, and represent groupings recognisable to their speakers, providing a level of accuracy which a monolithic 'English' system could not. In later chapters, we will also introduce some World English varieties, notably Singaporean and Hong Kong English, which are influenced by other languages spoken natively in the same environment; and we will consider a newly emerging accent, Multicultural London English (MLE).

1.3 The International Phonetic Alphabet

So far, the examples given have been rather general ones, or have involved analogies from outside language. Giving more detailed examples demands a more specific vocabulary, and a notation system dedicated to the description of sounds. The English spelling system, although it is the system of transcription familiar to most speakers of English, is both too restrictive and too lenient to do the job.

Without a universal transcription system for phonetics and phonology, writing down the unfamiliar sounds of other languages presents an almost insuperable challenge. Take, for example, a sound which English speakers do use, but only **paralinguistically** (that is, for purposes outside the language system itself): namely, the 'tut-tut' sound. When we see 'tut-tut' written down, we do not think of a word with a specific meaning, but of a repeated clicking noise which signals some

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sort of general disapproval. This description is hopelessly inadequate, however, for anyone else trying to recognise the sound in question, or to learn how to make it. In some languages, the 'tut-tut' **click** sound functions as a perfectly ordinary consonant, just like word-initial [b] in English *but* or [l] in *list*. However, hearing a native speaker use the 'tut-tut' click in a language where it is an ordinary consonant does not help us understand how the sound is made or how it compares with others either. Likewise, adopting the usual spelling from that language (assuming it is not one of the many without an **orthography**) might let us write the 'tut-tut' sound down; but this technique would not produce a universal system for writing sounds of the world's languages, since we would end up with a hotch-potch of symbols taken from the spelling systems of particular languages. There would be little consistency, and generalisation of such a system would be difficult, especially as spelling systems are often borrowed from one language into another, and they can be far from making perfect phonetic sense.

The situation is worse with 'exotic' sounds which do not happen to coincide even with those used paralinguistically in English: groping towards a description in ordinary English is far too vague to allow accurate reproduction of the sound in question; and indeed, such sounds tended by early commentators to be regarded as unstable or not quite proper. John Leighton Wilson, who published a brief description of the African language Grebo in 1838, had considerable difficulties with sounds which do not have an obvious English spelling, and tended to resolve this by simply not transcribing them at all. Thus, he notes that

> There is a consonant sound intermediate between b and p, which is omitted … with the expectation that it will, in the course of time, gradually conform to one or the other of the two sounds to which it seems allied.

Similarly, he observes 'a few words in the language so completely nasal that they cannot be properly spelled by any combination of letters whatever'.

It is for these reasons that the International Phonetic Alphabet was proposed in 1888; it has been under constant review ever since by the International Phonetic Association, and the latest revision dates from 2015. It is true that a certain amount of learning is required to become familiar with the conventions of the IPA and the characteristics of sounds underlying the notation, but once you know that 'tut-tut' is [ǀ], an **alveolar** click, it will always be possible to produce the relevant sound accurately, to write it down unambiguously and to recognise it in other languages.

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Although a universal system of description and transcription might be desirable in principle, and even in practice when dealing with unfamiliar languages and sounds, readers of a book both in and on English might question the necessity of learning the IPA. However, precisely the same types of problems encountered above, in relation to sounds which are not part of the system of English, also appear in connection with the phonology of English, and some new ones besides.

First, there is considerable ambiguity in the English spelling system, and it works in both directions: many sounds to one spelling, and many spellings to one sound. The former situation results in 'eye-rhymes', or forms which look as if they ought to have the same pronunciation but don't. There are various doggerel poems about this sort of ambiguity (often written by non-native speakers who have struggled with the system): one begins by pointing out a set of eye-rhymes – 'I gather you already know, Of *plough* and *cough* and *through* and *dough*'. Those four words, which we might expect to rhyme on the basis of the spelling, in fact end in four quite different **vowels**, and *cough* has a final consonant too. On the other hand, *see*, *sea*, *people*, *amoeba* and *fiend* have the same long [iː] vowel but five different spellings.

Despite these multiple ambiguities, attempts are regularly made to indicate pronunciations using the spelling system. None is wholly successful, for a variety of different reasons. This lack of precision can be particularly frustrating for phonologists trying to discover characteristics of earlier stages of English. John Hart, a well-known sixteenth-century grammarian, gives many descriptions of the pronunciations of his time, but the lack of a standard transcription system hampers him (and us) when it comes to one of the major mysteries of English phonology at this period: namely, the sound of the vowel spelled *a*. Hart mentions this explicitly, and tells us that it is made 'with wyde opening of the mouthe, as when a man yawneth'; but does that mean a back vowel, the sort now found for Standard Southern British English speakers in *father*, or a front one, like the *father* vowel for New Zealanders or Australians? Similarly, Thomas Low Nichols, discussing mid-nineteenth-century American English, notes that 'It is certain that men open their mouths and broaden their speech as they go West, until on the Mississippi they will tell you "thar are heaps of bar [bear] over thar, whar I was raised".' Here we have two related difficulties: the nature of the *a* vowel and what the orthographic *r* means, if anything. Most British English speakers (those from Scotland, Northern Ireland and some areas of the West Country excepted) will pronounce [ɹ] only immediately before a vowel, so an [ɹ] sound would be evident in *very* [vɛɹɪ] or *car engine* [kɑɹɛnʤɪn], but the last sound of *car* pronounced in isolation is a vowel [ɑː]. It follows that a

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London English speaker would naturally read the quote with [ɹ] at the end of the first *thar*, *bar* and *whar*, but not in the second *thar*, where the next word begins with a consonant. However, a Scot would produce [ɹ] in all these words, regardless of the following sound. Which is closer to what Thomas Low Nichols intended?

Orthographic *r* is still problematic today: when Michael Bateman, in a newspaper cookery column, writes that 'This cook, too, couldn't pronounce the word. It's not pah-eller; it's pie ey-yar,' he is producing a helpful guide for most English English speakers, who will understand that his 'transcription' of *paella* indicates a final vowel, since they would not pronounce [ɹ] in this context in English; but he is quite likely to confuse Scots or Americans, who would pronounce [ɹ] wherever *r* appears in English spelling, and may therefore get the mistaken idea that *paella* has a final [ɹ] in Spanish. In short, the fact that there are many different Englishes, and that each quite properly has its own phonological interpretations of the same spelling system (which, remember, is multiply ambiguous in the first place), means we encounter inevitable difficulties in trying to use spelling to give explicit information about sounds.

The same problems arise in a slightly different context when writers try to adapt the spelling system to indicate accent differences:

> 'Good flight?' asked Jessica at Christchurch Airport. I melodramatically bowed a depressurization-deaf ear towards her … before answering that it had been a little gruelling.
>
> 'You are a bit pale. But you'll still be able to get breakfast at the hotel … '
>
> What Jessica actually said was *git brikfist it the hitil.* The Kiwi accent is a vowel-vice voice, in which the *e* is squeezed to an *i*, the *a* elongated to an *ee.* A New Zealander, for example, writes with a *pin*, and signals agreement with the word *yis.*
>
> (Mark Lawson (1994), *The Battle for Room Service: Journeys to all the safe places*, London: Picador, p. 22)

Lawson succeeds in showing that a difference exists between New Zealand and English English, and provides a very rough approximation of that difference. However, anyone who has listened to New Zealand speakers will know that their pronunciation of *pen* is not identical to Standard Southern British English *pin*, as Lawson's notation would suggest; and readers who have not encountered the variety might arrive at a number of different interpretations of his comments that New Zealand vowels are 'squeezed' or 'elongated'. The National Centre for English Cultural Tradition in Sheffield has produced a list

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of local phrases, again rendered in a modified version of English spelling: it includes *intitot* ('Isn't it hot?'), *eez gooinooam* ('he's going home') and *lerrus gerrus andzwesht* ('Let's get our hands washed'). Sometimes the modifications are obvious and easy to interpret; the lack of *h* in *intitot* suggests that no [h] is pronounced, and the substitution of *r* for *t* in *lerrus gerrus* signals the common northern English weakening of [t] to [r] between vowels. But why double *rr*? The double vowel letters in *gooinooam* presumably signal long vowels; but the *rr* in *lerrus* certainly does not mean a long consonant. Such lists are amusing when the reader knows the variety in question, but reading the list in a respectable imitation of an unfamiliar accent would be rather a hit and miss affair.

The same goes for dialect literature, even when there is an informally agreed set of emendations to the spelling system, as is perhaps the case for Scottish English. Tom Leonard's poem 'Unrelated Incidents (3)' begins:

> this is thi
> six a clock
> news thi
> man said n
> thi reason
> a talk wia
> BBC accent
> iz coz yi
> widny wahnt
> mi ti talk
> aboot thi
> trooth wia
> voice lik
> wanna yoo
> scruff.

Again, many of the alterations are entirely transparent for a reader who is familiar with Scottish English – *aboot* does sound like *a-boot* rather than having the **diphthong** usually found in Standard Southern British English *about*, where a diphthong is a vowel which changes in quality during its production, with different start and end points. Likewise, *widny* rather than *wouldn't* is both clear and accurate. However, not everything is so obvious. *Trooth* is written to match *aboot*, and the two words do have the same vowel in Scots – but the former is pronounced like its English English equivalent, whereas the latter is not; so we might ask, why alter both? *Thi* is consistently written for *the*, and there

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is indeed a slight difference in those final vowels between the two varieties; but if we compare Tom Leonard with Mark Lawson, the impression given is that *thi* (= *the*) for a Scot sounds like *pin* (= *pen*) for a New Zealander, which is not the case at all.

In some cases of this type, there are attempts to introduce new symbols into the English spelling system to represent accent differences: one particularly common device is to use an apostrophe. This has become a fairly conventional and familiar device; but again, it turns out to be ambiguous. For instance, take the three phrases *I feel 'ot*, *She was waitin'* and *Give us the bu'er*. The first is perhaps the most straightforward: many speakers of non-standard varieties of English consistently drop their [h]s (and we all do, in pronouns under low **stress**, for instance, as in *What did he say*?, where [h] will be pronounced only in extraordinarily careful speech). In this case, then, the apostrophe means the standard [h] is omitted. This might, however, lead us to believe that an apostrophe always means that something is missing, relative to the standard pronunciation. Informal characterisations might support this **hypothesis**, since speakers producing forms like *waitin'* and *bu'er* are frequently described as 'dropping their gs' and 'dropping their ts' (or 'swallowing their ts') respectively: an article in *The Independent* of 28 June 2000 reports that 'the entire cast of *East Enders* … swallow their ts, ps and ks like true Glasgow speakers when using such words as "sta'ement" and "sea'belt"'. However, the phonetic facts suggest otherwise. Whereas *'ot* simply lacks an initial consonant, *waitin'* does not lack a final one: instead, the final [ŋ] of *waiting* has been replaced by [n] (recall the discussion of *incoherent* versus *intemperate* above). For most speakers, apart from some from the Midlands and north of England, there was no [g] to drop in the first place, simply one nasal in more formal circumstances, which shifts to another nasal in informal conversation. In *bu'er*, we also find one consonant, this time [t], being replaced by another, the **glottal stop**; but this time, the replacement is found in English only as an alternative for another sound. It has no independent orthographic representation, and is strongly associated with informal, non-standard and **stigmatised** usage.

If we are to consider these variants objectively, however, we need a system of notation which will allow us to observe them neutrally, providing transcriptions of each variety in its own terms: seeing the glottal stop as IPA [ʔ], which is a perfectly normal consonant in, say, Arabic, rather than regarding it as an unsymbolisable grunt or a debased form of another consonant, is more likely to allow us to analyse the facts of accent variation without seeing every departure from an idealised standard variety as requiring apology. The linguistic arbitrariness but

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social grounding of such judgements is apparent from forms like *car park* – a standard Standard Southern British English pronunciation will have no [ɹ] in either word, and to a Scottish English speaker with both [ɹ]s invariably produced, there is certainly something missing; but you don't tend to see this represented as *ca' pa'k*, or hear southerners accused of 'swallowing their [r]s'.

For all these cases, what we need is a consistent, agreed system of transcription, so that we can assess the accent differences we find and compare them with confidence. Of course, no purely phonetic system is going to help with the meaning of items of vocabulary a reader has not met before – an IPA transcription will not tell you what a *hampot* is, or *glaur*, or a *beagie*, if you don't know. But at least you have the comfort of knowing how the locals pronounce it.

At the same time, this is an introductory text on English, and not a handbook of general phonetics, so for the most part, unless comparisons with other languages are important, only those sections of the IPA relevant to English sounds will be considered. We shall begin with consonants in Chapter 3 and move on to vowels, where most accent variation in English is concentrated. However, before introducing the IPA in detail, we must also confront a phonological issue. As we have already seen, native speakers of a language cannot always be relied upon to hear every theoretically discernible gradation of sound. In some cases, the IPA supplies alternative symbols in cases where speakers will be quite sure they are hearing the same thing; and this is not a universal limitation of human ears, but rather varies from language to language. To illustrate this, and to resolve the problem that sometimes speakers think they are hearing something quite different from what they objectively are hearing, we must introduce the concept of the **phoneme**.

Exercises and topics for discussion

1. If the International Phonetic Alphabet is meant to be universal, how can it make sense for there to have been regular revisions? Find out about the history of the IPA, and the reasons for some of the revisions that have been made in more recent versions.

2. Find some examples of English spelling being used to represent different accents of English (for example, in novels, poetry, or dialogue in plays). Using these data, work out when it is easier to interpret what sounds are actually intended, and when it is more difficult, and why.

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Recommendations for reading

Comparisons of human and animal language are provided in Aitchison (2007) and there is relevant discussion in Pinker (1994). More detail on the debates about how humans became a linguistic species, and how we acquired the capacity to speak, is to be found in McMahon and McMahon (2012), and Deutscher (2006) provides a very accessible introduction to the mysteries of human language **acquisition**, evolution and change. For introductions to child language and language acquisition, see Saxton (2017) and Fletcher and MacWhinney (1996). Trudgill (2000a) is an accessible introduction to dialects and why they are important, although it is fairly narrowly focused on England (more reading on language variation will be suggested in later chapters). A detailed account of the history and usage of the IPA is provided in International Phonetic Association (1999), and further information is available at <https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/> (all websites last accessed 1 July 2019). You can download the IPA chart and IPA fonts from here; the latest major revision was in 2015 and charts are re-issued every year. You can find an interactive IPA chart with accessible pronunciations and descriptions, developed by Cambridge University Press in association with the Department of Linguistics, University of California, at <https://www.cambridge.org/fr/academic/textbooks/genetti/ipa-chart>.

If you do want to know what *hampot*, *glaur* and *beagie* mean, try the Scottish National Dictionary at <http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>. You can find out more about Scots at the Scots Language Centre (<https://www.scotslanguage.com>).

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